Medical advances have helped us live longer, but we are not necessarily living better. The promise of big data is that one day we will understand the drivers of health and chronic disease, and that prevention will overtake treatment. There is an opportunity today, however, to use technology to help people stay well longer and to improve care for them as the diseases of aging set in.

The right environment can prove cost-effective and maintain life satisfaction. The majority of those over 65 today want to age in place. But for most, more needs to be done to enable aging in a home setting. Falls, for instance, are the leading cause of injury and death among the elderly. Technology adoption is a gateway to more positive aging expectations and experience by serving as a gateway for assistive services and home monitoring, providing support for family caregivers and enabling greater social interaction with friends and family. Intuitive interfaces, such as those that offer voice activation and speech recognition, may offer an easy introduction for those who are not digitally savvy. While point solutions such as these can move the needle a bit, it will be integrated platforms of care, enabled by the convergence of industries — new entrants and traditional health stakeholders — that will reshape the way we think about health and health care.

Digital adoption will be very different for 65-year-olds in 2030 and 2060:

- Around 4 in 10 (42%) adults ages 65 and older now report owning smartphones, up from just 18% in 2013.
- Today, 64% of seniors use the internet – a 55 percentage point increase in just under two decades. Half of older Americans now have broadband at home.
- Seniors ages 65 to 69 are about twice as likely as those ages 80 and older to say they ever go online or have broadband at home, and they are roughly four times as likely to say they own smartphones.

Most older adults want to age in place

% of adults ages 65 and older who say they would ___ if they could no longer live on their own

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stay in home but have someone there to care for them</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Move into an assisted-living facility</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Move in with a family member</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Move into a nursing home</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Based on US adults ages 65 and older who live in their own home and do not have someone providing care at home (n=363). “Don’t know” and other volunteered responses not shown.

Part of managing the increasingly common incidence of chronic disease is regular contact between patients and their medical providers. Technologies that promote those interactions, and reduce costs, could be the key to improving outcomes. In a survey of adults in the United States conducted in early 2018, EY found that more than half (54%) of respondents indicated that they were comfortable with contacting their physician digitally. And the majority of Americans are comfortable using technology to track health- or exercise-related information (63%) and are willing to share it with their doctor (60%). Physician attitudes mirror those of consumers: 71% believe that personal sensor data will increase overall population health, while 64% believe that these technologies will reduce the workload for physicians and nurses.

The global market for assistive devices for the elderly and disabled was valued at US$14b in 2015 and is expected to surpass US$26b by 2024.

Minimizing the gap between health span and life span is now of critical importance. Shrinking this gap could yield obvious benefits - decreasing costs of care; enabling societies to shift dollars spent to other investments; businesses would have more productive workforces; and individuals would have continued purpose while also retaining health and financial wellbeing. At EY, working toward this goal is how we build a better working world.

Source: EY analysis.
